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ACTION: AMB
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 001069

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/07/2015

TAGS: PREL SY LE TC

SUBJECT: UAE RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE - SYRIA MUST WITHDRAW
FROM LEBANON

REF: STATE 39018

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison.

Reasons: 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Ambassador delivered reftel talking points to Information Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan on March 7, noting that the UAE and the international community needed to make clear that a complete and immediate withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon was required. (Sheikh Abdullah has played a key role in the al Nahyan dealings with both Syria and Lebanon; he has met with Syrian President Bashar Al-Asad in the past and was the UAE's representative at the Hariri funeral.) Abdullah noted that the UAE cabinet had discussed the situation in Lebanon and the Syrian troop pullback earlier in the day. He expressed hope that Syria would move toward implementing the Taif accord. Ambassador noted the USG's belief that Syrian withdrawal to the Bekaa valley and then to the border was insufficient, and that compliance with UNSCR 1559 called for a total withdrawal of both Syria's military and intelligence forces from Lebanon. Abdullah said that the UAEG agreed on the importance of UNSCR 1559 and also on the importance of the UN inquiry into the Hariri assassination.

¶2. (C) Later in the day, WAM, the UAEG's official news agency, issued a statement calling the Syrian announcement "a positive step towards implementing the Taif Accord" that "comes in line with the UN Security Council resolution No. 1559." Ambassador telephoned Sheikh Abdullah to express disappointment with the tone of the WAM statement, and will follow up with MinState Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed al Nahyan and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan during scheduled March 8 meetings.
SISON